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III. Relationship with Other ORE and CIA Offices

Deficiencies and Suggested Improvements in CIA Translating Facilities

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Foreign Documents Division has consistently maintained close liaison with D/EE and has within the limits of its capabilities attempted to satisfy the requirements of this Division. However, the present setup in FDD is not satisfactory to meet the translation needs of this Division. This situation applies especially to economic information; the following comments pertain to translation of economic reports.

Newspaper coverage is generally adequate although full translations of certain articles specifically requested are often so slow as to destroy the timeliness of the information. Selections of material are not always satisfactory but this is improving somewhat through FDD's constant efforts to determine exactly what is wanted.

Periodicals of considerable value (industrial journals, general economic journals, etc.) are received regularly by FDD, but translated extracts are not adequate. FDD does not have sufficient personnel to translate all of the material required by this Division nor does it have translators with sufficient knowledge of the subjects being translated to permit a completely satisfactory selection of material for translation. In addition, it is impossible for FDD translators to keep informed on the detailed day-to-day problems and requirements of this Division.

There are numerous comprehensive books embracing many phases of the Soviet and Satellite economies. Translations of this material are so scarce as to be almost nonexistent. FDD is not organized to handle a significant amount of this material.

Special documents such as Economic Plans, economic reports carried out of the country by defectors, etc. are given the priority and attention they deserve but again it is impossible for FDD to adequately process this material and at the same time to meet a significant part of its other obligations.

The Economic Branch, D/EE, is currently piecing together numerous bits of information to make comprehensive studies of various segments of the economy when actually a large part of this information is often bound up in an untranslated report, periodical, or book. The inadequacy of translation facilities is a serious problem and represents the sterilization of a lot of information which was procured through heavy expenditures of time, money, and effort and often at considerable risk.

It is believed that the services of FDD to this Division could be improved, particularly in the translation of books and periodicals, if the following suggestions were adopted:

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1. FDD translators should be made available to this Division to work with the analyst in scanning, selecting, and translating material believed of major importance. This system was used in connection with a major Project (IM 181) and resulted in elimination of a great deal of worthless information and in the selection of material for translation which was of great value to the report and the basic information of the Division. Subsequent requests to employ the same method in translating certain important documents have been refused because of insufficient personnel.

2. Sub-contracting of translations to outside services should be utilized. Admittedly this would have to be on a highly selective basis in view of the security aspects involved; however, there are many translation services which would probably be reliable. Many industries have facilities for translation of foreign documents. Outstanding among these is the American Chemical Society which published Chemical Abstracts, a publication devoted to translation of foreign chemical reports. Individual companies are also translating industrial information. The Dupont Company, Allied Chemical, Carborundum Company, and General Electric are but a few of those engaged in translating material in which they have a special interest. The competent staffs of these and similar organizations should be utilized, as they have the unique combination of language facility and technical knowledge.

3. Attempts should be made to procure translations of Soviet orbit material from outside sources. FDD has already undertaken such a program on a limited scale. This operation should be expanded. Universities all over the country have students engaged in translating publications from behind the Iron Curtain and could provide translations of value. The Air Studies Project is also doing translations of this nature in the Library of Congress and there are many others doing similar work.

4. There should be closer cooperation with the [] to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort. This Division recently obtained an untranslated copy of the 1941 production plan for the Soviet Union which listed valuable details not available elsewhere. The document was too large for FDD to translate in its entirety and there are some discussion as to which parts should have priority in translation. In the meantime, a representative of this Division discovered that the document had been completely translated by the [] and a copy was requested, obviating the necessity for further activity by FDD. This but one example. Closer liaison with the [] would reduce the possibility of such duplications.

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